

An Evaluation of the Comprehensive Guidance Program in Utah Public Schools

Abstract of the Study and Key Findings

Methodology

A survey of Comprehensive Guidance Programs throughout the state of Utah was commissioned by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) and conducted in October and November of 1997. The survey was conducted to determine the impacts of more fully implemented Comprehensive Guidance Programs on the Student Education and Occupation Plan (SEOP) process and related indicators in Utah schools.

Each qualifying school received a packet from USOE. The packet included surveys to be completed by the counseling department, the principal, and three randomly selected teachers. Participation in the survey was exceptional. Of the 193 schools that received packets, 176 responded before December 2, 1997, a return rate of 91 percent.

Conclusions

More fully implemented Comprehensive Guidance Programs have had positive impacts on all aspects of the SEOP process. They have also positively influenced many other aspects of guidance in Utah schools. Listed below are the major successes of Comprehensive Guidance.

Major Successes of the Comprehensive Guidance Program

1. SEOP Policies. Schools and district have created and implemented SEOP policies based on state law and USOE guidelines.
2. Parent Support. Parent involvement in the SEOP process has increased.
3. Resources. Career exploration resources, especially career centers, have become more available and more accessible. The quality and use of these resources has also improved.
4. Use of Time. The amount of counselor time working directly with students has increased.
5. Training. Counselors have received training that has enabled them to perform more effectively in their schools.
6. Program Coordination. Feeder System have improved their ability to coordinate guidance activities and processes among school levels.
7. District Support. District support of guidance activities, products, and processes has increased.
8. Extent of Services. Students from special populations have been involved in appropriate guidance activities and the SEOP process.
9. SEOP Conferences. Student attendance at SEOP conferences has increased.
10. Student Interest. Students have become more interested in planning their education and career development. This has resulted in more students taking applied technology and higher level academic courses.

*Significant Differences Between High and Low Implementing High Schools
In the Comprehensive Guidance Program*

The survey data identified a group of high implementing high schools on the Comprehensive Guidance Program. These schools reported a higher level of success in implementing the various components of the program. A group of low implementing schools was also identified.

- ◆ Students in high implementing schools rated their overall educational preparation as more adequate.
- ◆ Students in high implementing schools rated their job preparation as better.
- ◆ Students in high implementing schools took more advanced mathematics and science courses.
- ◆ Fewer students in high implementing schools described their programs as “general.”
- ◆ Students in high implementing schools took more vocational/technical courses.
- ◆ Students in high implementing schools had higher ACT scores in every area of the test.
- ◆ Student in high implementing schools rated guidance and career planning service in the schools higher.

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